

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A hearth guard to cover a raised hearth comprising:

- 5 a first end section;
- a second end section;
- an adjustable center section, each of said sections comprising a cushioning material;
- a connecting means to connect said sections; and
- 10 fastening means.

2. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said first end section and said second end section independently comprise:

- 15 a top panel;
- a front panel; and
- optionally, a side panel, each of said panels molded from the cushioning material; and
- a covering means for each of said panels;
- 20 wherein said fastening means fastens said covered top panel to said covered front panel, optionally said fastening means

further fastening said covered side panel to both said covered top and front panels, such that said fastened covered panels form a structure to encase an end of the raised hearth.

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3. The hearth guard of claim 2, wherein said covering means is a cloth.

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4. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said first end section and said second end section each comprises a single piece molded from the cushioning material, said single molded piece forming a structure to encase an end of the raised hearth.

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5. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said adjustable center section comprises a single piece molded from the cushioning material, said single molded piece forming a structure having a 90 degree angle to encase a center section of the raised
20 hearth.

6. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said adjustable center section comprises a single piece having a top panel and a front panel, said top panel and said front panel molded from the cushioning material to fold across an angle juncture formed by said panels, wherein said folded single molded piece unfolds to a structure having a 90 degree angle to encase a center section of the raised hearth.

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7. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said adjustable center section comprises:

a top panel; and

a front panel, each of said panels molded from the cushioning material,

wherein said top and front panels are positioned at a 90 degree angle relative to each other to encase a center section of the raised hearth.

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8. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said adjustable center section is adjustable in length.

5 9. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said adjustable center section is perforated at parallel intervals along the width thereof, said perforated segments removed thereby adjusting length.

10 10. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said adjustable center section is cut along a line parallel to the length thereof thereby adjusting length.

15 11. The hearth guard of claim 1, further comprising:
a first removable decorative fabric cover; and
a second removable decorative fabric cover, each of said adjustable decorative fabric covers having a length at least sufficient to cover said end sections and said center section of the hearth
20 guard,

wherein said fastening means fastens said first and said second fabric covers to a surface of said end sections of the hearth guard; and

wherein said fastening means fastens said first fabric cover to said second fabric cover along the length of the hearth guard.

12. The hearth guard of claim 1, further comprising a fire-resistant coating applied thereon.

13. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein the cushioning material is foam.

14. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said connecting means comprises a telescoping slider mechanism, Velcro, a strap, or a tie-string.

15. The hearth guard of claim 14, wherein said connecting means further comprises a bracket secured thereto.

5 16. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said fastening means anchors said first and said second end sections to the raised hearth.

10 17. The hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said fastening means comprises sewing, Velcro, zippers, snaps, tie strings or buttons.

15 18. A method of protectively covering a raised hearth comprising the step of:

 assembling the hearth guard of claim 1, wherein said hearth guard is assembled to securely fit over exposed surfaces and edges of the raised hearth thereby protectively covering the raised
20 hearth.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said assembling step comprises the steps of:

5 positioning a first end section of said hearth guard on a first end of the raised hearth, said first end section in a covering relationship to the raised hearth;

positioning a second end section of said hearth guard on a second end of the raised hearth, said second end section in a covering relationship to the raised hearth;

10 connecting said first and second end sections via said connecting means, said connecting means holding said first and second end sections securely against the raised hearth;

positioning a center section of said hearth guard between said first and said second end sections, wherein said center section is adjusted in length to fit securely between said first and said second end sections, said center section thereby in a covering relationship to the raised hearth; and

connecting said center section to said first end section and to said second end section via said connecting means.

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20. The method of claim 19, wherein positioning the center section of said hearth guard comprises the step of:

placing a single molded piece having a permanent 90 degree bend over a center section of the raised hearth.

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21. The method of claim 19, wherein positioning the center section of said hearth guard comprises the steps of:

unfolding a top panel from a front panel or vice versa,
10 both panels comprising a single molded piece of the center section,
to form a single molded piece having a 90 degree bend at a juncture
of said panels; and

placing said unfolded single molded piece over a center section of the raised hearth.

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22. The method of claim 19, wherein positioning the center section of said hearth guard comprises the steps of:

placing a top panel comprising said center section onto a
20 top center surface of said raised hearth; and

placing a front panel comprising said center section onto a front center surface of said raised hearth, wherein a top edge of said front panel is in contact with and juxtaposed at a 90 degree angle to a front edge of said top panel.

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23. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of:

covering said hearth guard with a removable decorative
10 fabric.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said covering step comprises the steps of:

15 fastening a first end of a first length of fabric to a surface of a front panel or, if a first end of the raised hearth comprises a corner, to a surface of a side panel comprising said first end section via said fastening means;

extending the first length of fabric across the front
20 surface of said hearth guard and, if said second end of the raised hearth comprises a corner, a side panel of said second end section;

fastening a second end of the first length of fabric to either a surface of a front panel or to a surface of the side panel comprising said second end section via said fastening means, said second fabric end fastened at a position to securely and completely cover the front surface and, if comprising said second end section, the side panel thereof;

fastening a first end of a second length of fabric to a surface of a top panel comprising said first end section or to the surface of the side panel, if the side panel comprises said first end section, via said fastening means;

extending the second length of fabric across the top surface of said hearth guard and, if comprising said second end section, the side panel thereof;

fastening a second end of the second length of fabric to either a surface of a top panel or to a surface of the side panel comprising said second end section via said fastening means, said second fabric end fastened at a position to securely and completely cover the top surface and, if comprising said second end section, the side panel thereof; and

fastening a top edge of said first fabric length to a front edge of said second fabric length via said fastening means.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

5 fastening a bottom edge of said first fabric length to the front surface of said hearth guard; and

fastening a back edge of said second fabric length to the top surface of said hearth guard.

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